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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOHAK 25//

TO COVEY/PASSAGE/RODMAN FOR THE SECRETARY

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE CONTAINS CODEWORD VIA BLACK PATCH HH61276

TOHAK 25

SEPTEMBER 17, 1976

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

SUBJECT:

INFORMATION ITEMS

FRANCE -- CHIRAC'S BACK: FORMER PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC IS BACK IN THE POLITICAL LIMELIGHT FOLLOWING AN ARTICLE HE WROTE IN A GAULLIST NEWSLETTER IN WHICH HE OFFERED HIMSELF AS THE CHAMPION OF GOVERNMENT FORCES IN THE UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTION BATTLE AND APPEALED FOR UNITY AMONG CONSERVATIVE AND MODERATE FORCES. AN ELYSEE PALACE SPOKESMAN "TERSELY" REMARKED THAT GISCARD HAD NO COMMENT ON CHIRAC'S "SPEEDY COMEBACK." PRESS SPECULATION IS THAT CHIRAC IS DELIBERATELY TRYING TO BYPASS THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S ELECTION TACTIC OF ATTRACTING RATHER THAN CONFRONTING THE MODERATE LEFT.

URUGUAY -- NEW PRESIDENT ALREADY IN TROUBLE: PRESIDENT MENDEZ' FIRST TWO WEEKS IN OFFICE HAVE BEEN STORMY, REPORTS EMBASSY MONTEVIDEO. MENDEZ WAS UNPOPULAR EVEN BEFORE TAKING THE OATH BECAUSE HE WAS NAMED FOR A FIVE-YEAR TERM WHEN THE POPULACE EXPECTED A THREE YEAR INTERIM PRESIDENCY. MATTERS WERE NOT HELPED WHEN HE SIGNED A CONSTITUTIONAL DECREE DEPRIVING VIRTUALLY ALL PROMINENT POLITICIANS OF THEIR POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR 15 YEARS. THIS LED TO THE RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF ECONOMY VEGH, EDITORIAL PROTESTS, AND SERIOUS RIFTS IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE EMBASSY HAS HEARD RUMBLINGS FROM MIDDLE GRADE MILITARY MEN ABOUT THE INEPTNESS OF THE MILITARY IN FORCING BORDABERRY'S RESIGNATION AND INSTALLING MENDEZ.

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PAGE 01

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URUGUAYAN POLITICIANS ARE REPORTEDLY DETERMINED TO REMAIN
ALONG FROM THE GOVERNMENT, CONVINCED IT CANNOT LAST MORE THAN
A YEAR.
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PSN1051750 PAGE 02 OF 02 TOR1250/23145Z DTG1170307Z SEP 76

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